

The online magazine for landscape photographers

on landscape

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on

Endframe

‘Cape Light’ by Joel Meyerowitz

Norman McCloskey discusses one of his favourite books

I have been a photographer for over 28 years, more than half my life, and during that time, I have made thousands of images and undoubtedly viewed hundreds of thousands more. We are all exposed to a massive amount of photography, growing at an exponential rate, but how many of these images ever really stick with us? How many have the profound effect that the artist probably hoped for? How many times have you viewed an image that changed your life?

Granted many of us can point to images or photographers that inspired us at the beginning, picking up an Ansel Adams book or seeing a spread about a photographer in a magazine. I began my photographic journey in a very different space, well before the dawn of the internet and living in a rural town where the library didn't have a single book on photography. I began making landscape images without anything to reference them to. It was at least a year into it before I was gifted an Ansel Adams book that filled me with awe and wonder but also slightly depressed me as I reckoned, I would never be this good... I was right!

CAPE LIGHT



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL MEYEROWITZ



Dune Grass House, Truro, Massachusetts, 1984, Copyright Joel Meyerowitz, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery

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Norman McCloskey



*Gold Column, Provincetown,
Massachusetts, 1977
Copyright Joel Meyerowitz,
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Gallery*





Porch, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1977, Copyright Joel Meyerowitz, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery



Porch, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1977, Copyright Joel Meyerowitz, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery



Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1976, Copyright Joel Meyerowitz, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery



Roseville Cottages, Truro, Massachusetts, 1976, Copyright Joel Meyerowitz, Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery

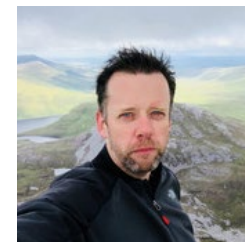
I was soon heading back to college, for the second time to study photography, but it was art college, and I was heading into the great unknown. Not knowing what to expect, I was lost when after the first week, we hadn't even picked up a camera, and the whole thing felt like some psychological experiment. An afternoon watching Derek Jarman's film 'Blue' was probably the final straw, and I was beginning to feel I had made a huge mistake and was going to quit. I can remember retreating to the library for sanctuary, and there I picked a book called 'Cape Light' by Joel Meyerowitz. It looked safe enough as it had a lovely landscape photograph on the cover, but what lay inside was genuinely incredible.

I sat down and leafed through the book and was both transfixed to that spot but yet transported off somewhere magical. Here was a photographer that was photographing a landscape he had a connection with, but also made beautiful images of his porch, beautiful portraits and interiors. Every type of image was a landscape of sorts, and above all, his use of beautiful light portrayed wonderful emotion through all the images. These aren't just pretty pictures; rather, these are potent images with depth and honesty that I had never experienced before. That duality of being both a beautiful stand-alone image and also one with a subtext was something that excited me.

I discovered that Joel was first and foremost known for being a street photographer and an incredibly talented and influential one at that. I was only just beginning to get an appreciation of that genre and portraiture but knowing that he also found a place for landscape work and made it relevant was a source of great comfort and inspiration for me at that time.

I discovered other photographers from the 'art world' who also worked in the landscape, and I realised perhaps there is a place for me in the course I was doing after all. Soon after I discovered many other photographers from the art world working with the landscape such as John Davies, the Bechers and later Andreas Gursky. All my subsequent work in college was landscape based, and I loved every minute of it, staying on when I came so close to walking away.

Although I credit this work with having such a significant impact on my photographic journey, I haven't ever set out to create a similar set of images or a collection of work like it. I do nonetheless, return to it time and again to enjoy the mastery of light and expression of mood present in all his photographs. More than learning compositional style or techniques of a photographer, if you indulge yourself with some time studying any photographer who manages to conjure up emotions utilising light so subtly, it will be time well spent.



Norman McCloskey

Norman McCloskey has been photographing the landscape of Ireland, in particular, the south-west since 1992. Although he has travelled all over the world, it is the Irish landscape that he has a deep-rooted connection to and a passion for working in. Having studied photography and worked in the editorial side of the industry for 18 years, he opened his gallery in Kenmare in 2015 which has been a great success. His work now forms part of private collections all over the world and has a growing list of commercial and private commissioning clients.
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